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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE RECITATION AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT

IN the recitation the teacher comes into his closest contact with the pupil. In the recitation focus the possibilities of guiding children's activities, influencing their language habits, and directing their observations. In discussing the significance of the recitation as an instrumentality of education, we are accordingly bringing to a head the points considered in the last three chapters, rather than introducing a new topic. The method in which the recitation is carried on is a crucial test of a teacher's skill in diagnosing the intellectual state of his pupils and in supplying the conditions that will arouse serviceable mental responses: in short, of his art as a teacher.

Importance of the recitation

The use of the word *recitation* to designate the period of most intimate intellectual contact of teacher with pupil and pupil with pupil is a fateful fact. To re-cite is to cite again, to repeat, to tell over and over. If we were to call this period *reiteration*, the designation would hardly bring out more clearly than does the word *recitation*, the complete domination of instruction by rehearsing of secondhand information, by memorizing for the sake of producing correct replies at the proper time. Everything that is said in this chapter is insignificant in comparison with the primary truth that the recitation is a place and time for stimulating and directing reflection, and that reproducing memorized

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